

# TRAILS & TALES

SEPTEMBER 2020

GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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## **Big Bear Bash** *By: Terry Grimsley*

After too many months of hunkering down a few of us decided it was time for some social distancing in Big Bear over Labor Day weekend (9/3/2020). George Graham and Jerry & Mary Grimsley arrived at our new campsite (on private property) early in the day on Thursday while Kevin & Dayna Mackintosh and Terry & Cheri Grimsley arrived late Thursday night. David Lowe arrived early Friday morning.

On tap for Friday were the proverbial favorites Gold Mountain (3N69) and John Bull (3N10) Jeep trails. Anticipating a busy day on the Jeep trails we left camp at 8:30 AM already aired down and ready to hit the trail. Gold Mountain has always been the rockiest trail on the mountain but over the years new obstacles have developed making it one of the more challenging ones as well. The gate keeper is well up the trail but the left line through this rock pile was an easy drive up. Just beyond it lays "the slab", one of the more prominent rock features on the trail. After the trail boss worked his way up the rock pile, the group stacked some rocks making the obstacle easier for the rest. We continued climbing the mountain and finally took a break at the quarry. With the sound of vehicles in the distance we climbed back in the Jeeps and continued on. The remainder of the trail was completed without any issues. After regrouping on 3N16 we headed the direction of John Bull via the mini-John Bull trail (3N02). What was once just another route to get to the main event has become a fun little trail in itself with a handful of obstacles that get your attention.

Much to our surprise when we arrived at the John Bull trailhead there were no vehicles in sight. Normally we would have immediately hit the trail and had lunch at the top but since the trails had been relatively quiet we opted to have lunch before setting out. After lunch, Kevin swapped seats with my co-driver so he could see firsthand what this trail has in store. The trail boss was followed by

*Photos by: Jerry Grimsley*



**David Lowe climbing the Gate Keeper on the Gold Mountain Trail.**



**David under the Cherokee checking for damage.**

George and David while the other two Jeeps decided to take a scenic drive back to camp. The gate keeper had an obvious new addition, as someone had winched a rather sizeable wedge-shaped rock down into the trail. Despite this addition the gate keeper was easier than usual. After the three rigs cleared this obstacle we picked our way up through the rocks as we climbed the mountain. Upon arriving at "granite hell" it was immediately clear that we needed to stop and take a look on foot. The right line that we had used in past years had changed drastically and had some very large rocks placed perfectly to catch the rear differential. Because of their placement and the features surrounding them it would be virtually impossible to keep from hanging on them. This forced us take the far left line up through the obstacle. The trail boss and George cleared this feature easily but the same could not be said for David. Mechanical difficulties (non-functioning ARB's and a Harbor Freight winch) forced George to back up off the trail so he could get his winch line on David. After extracting David from "granite hell", we finished the trail without incident and were back in camp by about 2 PM. After returning to camp, David discovered that he had other problems, so he loaded the Grand Cherokee on the trailer and headed back to Ridgecrest. The rest of the day was spent relaxing in the shade and enjoying each other's company. When the sun went down we enjoyed a wonderful evening around the campfire.

On Saturday we decided to get an early start once again (to beat the heat) and headed westbound on 3N16 straight for the west end of the Holcomb Creek trail (3N93). The east end gate keeper is a rock garden about 100 yards in length. Everyone picked their way through without any problem and up the trail we went. A short while later the trail boss was dead in the trail due to a bad fuel pump connector. Fortunately, after a few wiggles of the wiring, we were back underway. Our group arrived at the west end of the middle rock garden just as another group arrived at the east end. Since our side of the rock garden was not conducive to passing we had the first go. After adjusting his line, the trail boss dropped through boulder pile pausing midway to wait for the Mackintosh Jeep. With the exception of a couple of loud crashes they dropped through without much effort. The last two with YJ's (Graham & Grimsley's) took good lines and cleared the obstacle and made their way over to the shade for a lunch break. While our group was working its way through the rock garden, a few other vehicles had queued up for their turn on the west end waiting for the eastbound vehicles to clear the way. As we lunched more and more vehicles queued up on both ends waiting for their turn. By the time we finished lunch and departed, there were about a dozen rigs waiting on the east end and quite a few on the west end. The trail was starting to look like the 405 freeway at rush hour.

On Sunday, we headed over to the mountains to the south east side of the lake to run the Heartbreak Ridge (2N61Y) trail. On the way to the trailhead and in the middle of town the fuel pump connector decided to act up again. Fortunately the delay was minimal and we were back underway. With the warm weather we once again headed for the low end of the trail first so we could work our way back up to higher elevations as the day progressed. After turning off of 2N02 we made our way back to the west, up a couple of rock gardens and to the start



**Terry starting the John Bull Jeep trail with David watching.**

**George following Terry up John Bull.**



*Photos by:  
Jerry Grimsley*



**The group out around the pleasant campfire.**

**The Mackintosh's coming down the rocks on Holcomb Creek trail.**



**Jerry & George on the Heartbreak Ridge Trail.**

of the trail. We started up the trail and made our way past the vintage Pontiac that's been long abandoned in the wash. Amazingly much of the chrome still looks as good as it did when it rolled off the assembly line! This is one of the few trails that seems like it's actually gotten a bit easier over the years. The sluice section of the trail is still filled in with sand and gravel so it's an easy drive. In the other rock gardens, the rocks were either laying down or pushed aside and required little effort to crawl over or around. After a leisurely lunch at the top we were back underway and heading back to camp. At this point the fuel pump connector decided to make things difficult and periodically shut the Jeep down. While it was a little aggravating each time a simple wiggle of the wires and we were back underway. As with the prior days we were back in camp early. As dusk hit the trail boss and Mackintosh's went out for a short night run in the Pinnacles area. The Mackintosh's JK ended up with a wee bit of rock rash from the squeeze and of course the fuel pump connector continued to act up. Upon returning it was another spectacular evening around the fire.

Monday morning the smoke from the fire was really thick. Between the smoke and the flaky fuel pump connector the LA Grimsley's and the Mackintosh's headed for home. Because of the fire and an accident going down the north side of the mountain there was only one way off the mountain. It took us almost two hours to get from camp to Running Springs. After Running Springs it was an easy drive down the mountain.

Another Big Bear weekend is in the books. With the exception of one Grand Cherokee (sorry David!) and a temperamental fuel pump connector (and the forest fire) it was an uneventful weekend. Translated that mean "EASY"! The campsite on private property worked out fantastic, as it was a very busy weekend on the mountain and the area we typically camp in was very congested. I think we will opt for the private property location again. However, we will likely move the run back to Memorial weekend so it's not quite as dry and hot. Until then, happy wheeling!

## **UPCOMING MEETING**

Our next meeting is this coming Wednesday, September 23 at 7:00pm via ZOOM:

Personal Meeting ID: **286 044 0821**

Required Meeting Passcode: **GG2020**

You will enter into a **WAITING ROOM**. Matt will then OPEN to allow us all in.

## **WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND?**

Some of us are planning the best run for all of 2020. And the best runs are rolling runs. The good news is there is room for more folks to join up. Next year, you can either be part of the talk about the best run of 2020 or listening to others talking about a great time and wishing you had your own stories to tell. **DON'T GET LEFT OUT!!**

So, what are we doing? A kick ass rolling run that will go down in club history. On Saturday morning we are leaving Ridgecrest, with a fuel stop in Big Pine, to have lunch at Eureka Dunes. Then we are heading out for Steele Pass and follow the road/wash down to Warm Springs for camp. Potluck dinner with me providing steaks. Bring your game and show us your camp cooking skills. On Sunday we are heading for Jackass Flats. A pristine and seldom visited area dotted with cabins and mines. Lot's to explore. Monday morning, we will finish up our exploring and then head back to Big Pine for fuel and head for home.

Three days in the back country doesn't get any better. So, get your game on, pack your camping gear and join up. Feel free to contact me by phone ((619) 665-3961), text or email ([scottwood27@yahoo.com](mailto:scottwood27@yahoo.com)) for questions and RSVP (have to buy enough steaks so no one goes hungry)!

**BRIAN REED is just a phone-call away for YOUR 4-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES PART NEEDS at 760-559-2124.**



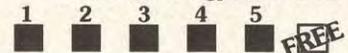
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### CLUB CALENDAR at a GLANCE

- Sept 23** Club meeting, 7:00pm via ZOOM!  
PLEASE SEE INFO ABOVE!
- Oct 28** Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting to be determined. All depends on what restrictions are still in place for the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Nov 18** Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting to be determined. All depends on what restrictions are still in place for the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Nov.26** THANKSGIVING

### 2020 TRAIL BOSSES NEEDED

- Oct 5 - 12 Moab, UT – Graham  
Want to attend, call George for details.
- Oct 10 -12 Saline Valley - Wood
- Nov 12-15 Panamint Valley Days

### DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT

Vice-President, Earl Wicker,  
to volunteer to lead a run at:  
[ebwicker@gmail.com](mailto:ebwicker@gmail.com) OR: 760-608-7240 – cell  
OR 760-446-2121 - home

### ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT

National Public Lands News

Get updates & info at: <http://nplnews.com/>

Office located at: 941 E. Ridgecrest Blvd or call @ 760-371-1073

### CLUB WEBSITE

Please check the club Face Book page or our website for the latest information regarding meetings & runs at:

[www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/](http://www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/)

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